

Montana Department of Military Affairs
Disaster & Emergency Services Division
State Emergency Coordination Center

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Situation Report for Tuesday, July 24, 2003 (issued @ 14:00 hrs.)

Wildfires of 2003

Attention * - New information shown in today's report displayed in ***Bold Italics*** type.

I. - Background Information:

- Montana has been experiencing an extended period of drought. Recently, the state has also suffered through a period of unseasonably hot weather. The combination of these two factors resulted in a significant increase in "initial attack" fire activity. Worsening fire/weather conditions and a lack of available resources are causing a dramatic increase in the percentage of new fires that escape "initial attack" efforts. Fire managers are predicting conditions that may rival those of 2000.

II. - Current Montana Fire Conditions: (as reported to NRCC last evening)

- **Northern Rockies Preparedness Level = 4** **National Preparedness Level = 5**
- ***Previous 24 hours; light initial attack activity*** – 9 new fires for 1,593 acres
- **Wedge Canyon – Type 2 Incident Management Team (Sandman), 4,500 acres, 5% contained, 20 miles E of Eureka, Montana.**
- **Black Frog Complex - Type 1 Incident Management Team (Frye), will consist of the Blackwall Fire and the Frog Pond fire.**
- **Missouri Breaks Complex - Type 2 Incident Management Team (Gray), 122,400 acres, 40% contained. This Complex is made up of the Big Coulee (24,000 acres), Ghost Coulee (1,000 acres – 100% contained), Germaine (63,000 acres) and Indian (34,000) fires. Complex located 35 miles NW of Jordan, Montana.**
- **Big Creek – Type 2 Incident Management Team (Swope), 1,148 acres, 25% contained, 4 miles NW of Victor, Montana.**
- **Hidden Lake – Type 2 Incident Management Team (Chrisman), 2,500 acres, 5% contained, 30 miles W of Dillon, Montana.**
- **Slims – Type 2 Incident Management Team (Benes), 1,250 acres, 35 nautical miles E**

of Grangeville, Idaho.

- Long Mountain – 158 acres, 75% contained, 2 miles E of Neihart, Montana.
- Amethyst – 315 acres, 60% contained, expect containment 8/3, 25 miles SE of Mammoth Hot Springs, Wyoming.
- Trapper Creek Complex - Fire Use Team (Cook), 5,300 acres, 0% contained, This Complex is made up the Trapper Creek (4,000 acres), Paul Bunyan (300 acres) and Wolf Gun (1,000 acres) fires located 45 statute miles NE of Kalispell, MT.
- Indian Spring – 606 acres, 100% contained, 35 miles S of Billings, Montana.
- Ross Creek – 100 acres, 0% contained, 20 air miles SW of Troy, Montana.
- Roberts – 3,200 acres, 0% contained, Flathead NF, Type 1 Team ordered.

- **STATE FORECAST FOR MONTANA**
NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE
500 AM MDT THU JUL 24 2003

WEST OF THE CONTINENTAL DIVIDE

*Today - Partly Cloudy. Slight Chance Of Showers And Thunderstorms In The South.
Highs 85 To 95.*

*Tonight - Partly Cloudy. Slight Chance Of Showers And Thunderstorms In The South.
Lows 45 To 55.*

Friday - Partly Cloudy. Slight Chance Of Afternoon Showers And Thunderstorms Far South. Highs 82 To 92.

CENTRAL MONTANA

Today - Mostly Sunny. Highs In The Upper 80s To Mid 90s.

*Tonight - Partly Cloudy In The Evening Then Clearing. Chance of Evening Thunderstorms. Some Storms May Produce Strong Gusty Winds.
Lows In The Lower To Mid 50s.*

Friday - Partly Cloudy. Slight Chance Of Thunderstorms. Highs In The Lower 80s To Lower 90s.

SOUTHWEST MONTANA

Today - Partly Cloudy. Chance Of Thunderstorms. Some Storms May Produce Strong Gusty Winds. Highs In The Lower 80s To Mid 90s.

Tonight - Partly Cloudy. Chance Of Thunderstorms In The Evening Then Slight Chance Of Showers And Thunderstorms After Midnight. Some Storms May Produce Strong Gusty Winds. Lows In The Upper 40s To Mid 50s.

Friday - Partly Cloudy. Slight Chance Of Showers And Thunderstorms In The Morning. Highs In The Upper 70s To Upper 80s.

EASTERN AND SOUTHERN MONTANA

Today - Becoming Partly Cloudy. A Chance Of Thunderstorms Southwest. Highs 95 To 105.

Tonight - Partly Cloudy. A Chance Of Thunderstorms. Lows In The Mid 50s To Mid 60s.

Friday - Partly Cloudy And Cooler. A Slight Chance Of Thunderstorms. Highs In The Mid 80s To Lower 90s.

III. - Summary of Actions being taken by Local Government Officials:

Local government resources from various jurisdictions have been actively engaged in fire fighting efforts, particularly during the past several days. The evacuation of residents whose properties have been threatened have been conducted as required.

• Local Emergency and Disaster Declarations Date Filed

Cascade County	Emergency Declaration (Box Canyon/Long Mtn.)	7/15/03
Garfield County	Disaster Declaration (Missouri Breaks)	7/15/03
Beaverhead County	Emergency Resolution (multiple fires)	7/17/03
Ravalli County	Emergency Declaration (Big Creek)	7/20/03
Flathead County	Emergency Declaration (Wedge Canyon)	7/21/03
Sanders County	Resolution (Level I Fire Restrictions)	7/17/03

• Fire Restrictions and Closures Effective Date

Northwestern Zone	Stage I Restrictions	July 21, 2003
Southwestern Zone	None	N/A
Central Montana Zone	Stage I Restrictions	July 18, 2003
South Central Zone	Stage I Restrictions	July 18, 2003
Eastern Montana Zone	Stage I Restrictions (Billings)	July 18, 2003
	Stage I Restrictions (Lewistown)	July 21, 2003
	None (Miles City)	N/A

IV. - Summary of State Activities and Resources Committed:

State Declaration:

On 7/18/03, Governor Judy Martz signed an Executive Order (# 14-03) in which she declared a statewide emergency thereby enabling mobilization of state resources (including the Montana National Guard) should they be needed to help protect the

life, health and/or property of Montana's citizens.

Requests for State Assistance:

- Montana DES is supplying two individuals to Garfield County serving as Agency Representatives, assisting with disaster recovery efforts.
- The Montana National Guard is assisting "initial attack" fire suppression operations by supplying 2 UH-60 (Blackhawk) Helicopters and approximately 20 people. One helicopter is currently assigned to the Flathead Interagency Dispatch Center, and the other is assigned to the Helena Interagency Dispatch Center. One NG Liaison Officer has been assigned to the Northern Rockies Coordination Center (NGCC) in Missoula.

Status of State Emergency Coordination Center (SECC)

- Montana DES is providing support to local governments through the State Emergency Coordination Center in Helena. The SECC is operating at Activation Level III with extended hours (0700-1900 every day).
- The State Emergency Coordination Center (SECC) will continue to monitor conditions and is prepared to provide 24-hour incident support to local governments. After office hours (i.e., 1900-0700) support is available through the DES Duty Officer who may be reached at (406) 841-3911.